

## 18 percent of Liberty resident live in poverty

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There is a very slim margin between the number of poor people living in Liberty County and those living in poverty across the state.

According to the American Community Survey's three-year average data, which was released in 2005, 18 percent of Liberty County residents either meet or live below the poverty line, trailing Georgia's current poverty level by two percent.

Last year, according to an ACS one-year survey, the city of Hinesville topped the state's poverty levels by one percent.

Clare Richie, senior budget analysis for the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, said that while Georgia's 2008 median household income was listed by the U.S. Census Bureau as \$50,861, the typical Georgia household did not see median income growth from 2001 to 2008. County residents were not excluded from the stagnant figures.

Richie said the ACS lists Hinesville's median household income for 2008 as \$40,324.

"Public needs are growing dramatically and the state's ability to meet them is shrinking, indicating that we now more than ever need a balanced approach to this economic crisis that includes revenues. Only then can Georgia give people the help they need today and invest in tomorrow's economic growth."

Richie said she is calling on Georgia's lawmakers to take action, but state Rep. Al Williams, D-Midway, said that from his vantage point there seems to be no relief in sight.

"Unfortunately, there has not been a lot of social legislation coming out of Georgia. Primarily it has all been put on the federal government," he said. "All I see on the horizon are further cuts. I think we've gone overboard and we desperately need the revenue because we're beginning to feel it."

Richie said she hopes the state's lawmakers will reconsider.

"Georgia has the ninth worst budget deficit in the country, yet is the only state in the top 10, and one of the only states in the country, that has not considered raising revenues," she said.

New figures concerning the poverty data for Liberty County will be released by American Community Survey on Oct. 27.

